

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the above-captioned application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously presented): A multimedia information playback apparatus comprising:

first input means for receiving multimedia information including video data and audio data distributed from a first distribution source, wherein the first distribution source comprises a storage device for storing the multimedia information, and wherein a user side comprises the first distribution source;

second input means for receiving control information distributed from a second distribution source, wherein the second distribution source comprises a network server for distributing the control information, and wherein the control information comprises one or more instructions for reading multimedia information on the storage device; and

playback means for playing back the multimedia information received by said first input means on the basis of at least one of the instructions of the control information received by said second input means, and wherein the playback means plays back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by said first input means, on the basis of at least one of the instructions of the control information which is distributed from the network server and received by said second input means;

wherein the playback means has a first playback mode in which said playback means plays back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by said first input means, on the basis of the control information which is distributed from the storage device and received by said second input means, and wherein the play back of the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by said first input means, on

the basis of the control information which is distributed from the network server and received by said second input means by the said playback means is a second playback mode, and the apparatus further comprises switching means for switching a playback mode to either one of the first and second playback modes, and wherein said playback means comprises:

a first navigator unit comprising a first program for reading out the control information in the storage device by said second input means in the first playback mode, analyzing the readout control information, and controlling read of the multimedia information in the storage device in accordance with an analysis result; wherein the first program is stored in the multimedia information playback apparatus; and

a second navigator unit comprising a second program for controlling read of the multimedia information in the storage device on the basis of the control information distributed from the network server in the second playback mode, wherein the second program is obtained from the network server.

2-4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said switching means comprises:

authentication means for authenticating the network server upon reception of a switching request signal from a user; and

means for switching the playback mode of said playback means to the second playback mode when said authentication means authenticates the network server as an authentic network server.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the network server generates group management information for managing a plurality of users having similar personal information as one group and generates, based on the group management information, for controlling playback of the multimedia information, and wherein the playback means plays back the multimedia information based on the generated control information.

8. (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said playback means comprises determination means for, when change operation of the control information by a user is detected during playback of the multimedia information, determining whether to receive the change operation, in accordance with personal information of the user, and when said determination means determines that the change operation of the control information is receivable, said playback means plays back the multimedia information on the basis of the control information changed in accordance with user operation.

9. (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the network server distributes multimedia information of digital broadcasting having a plurality of channels, and said playback means plays back multimedia information of a channel corresponding to the control information.

10. (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the control information contains a program for checking user operation contents, and when user operation is detected during playback of the multimedia information, said playback means executes the program, and plays back multimedia information corresponding to the user operation contents.

11. (Previously presented): A multimedia information playback method comprising:

a first step of receiving multimedia information having video data and audio data distributed from a first distribution source; wherein the first distribution source comprises a storage device for storing the multimedia information, and wherein a user side comprises the first distribution source;

a second step of receiving control information distributed from a second distribution source, wherein the second distribution source comprises a network server for distributing the control information, and wherein the control information comprises one or more instructions for reading multimedia information on the storage device; and

a third step of playing back the multimedia information received by execution of the first step on the basis of at least one of the instructions for reading multimedia information of the control information received by execution of the second step and wherein the third step comprises a fourth step of playing back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by execution of the first step, on the basis of at least one of the instructions for reading multimedia information of the control information which is distributed from the network server and received by execution of the second step; and

wherein the third step comprises:

a fifth step of playing back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by execution of the first step, on the basis of the control information which is distributed from the storage device and received by execution of the second step, wherein the control information is executed by a first control program obtained from an internal storage device; and

a sixth step of playing back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by execution of the first step, on the basis of the control information which is distributed from the network server and received by execution of the second step, wherein the control information in the sixth step is executed by a second program obtained from the network server; and

the method further comprises a seventh step of executing either one of the fifth and sixth steps.

12-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously presented): The method of claim 11, wherein the seventh step comprises:

an eighth step of authenticating the network server upon reception of a switching request signal from a user; and

a ninth step of executing the sixth step when the network server is authenticated as an authentic network server on the basis of execution of the eighth step.

16. (Previously presented): The method of claim 11, wherein the third step comprises:

an eighth step of reading out the control information in the storage device on the basis of execution of the second step in executing the fifth step, analyzing the readout control information, and controlling read of the multimedia information in the storage device in accordance with an analysis result; and

a ninth step of controlling read of the multimedia information in the storage device on the basis of the control information distributed from the network server in executing the sixth step.

17. (Previously presented): The method of claim 11, wherein the network server comprises:

a first step of generating group management information for managing a plurality of users having similar personal information as one group and generating, based on the group management information, the control information for controlling playback of the multimedia information; and

wherein the third step comprises a fifth step of playing back the multimedia information on the basis of the control information generated by execution of the first step of the network server.

18. (Previously presented): The method of claim 11, wherein the third step comprises:

a fifth step of, when change operation of the control information by a user is detected during playback of the multimedia information, determining whether to receive the change operation, in accordance with personal information of the user; and

a sixth step of, when the change operation of the control information is determined to be receivable by execution of the fifth step, playing back the multimedia information on the basis of the control information changed in accordance with user operation.

19. (Previously presented): The method of claim 11, wherein the network server comprises:

a first step of distributing multimedia information of digital broadcasting having a plurality of channels; and

the third step comprises a fifth step of playing back multimedia information of a channel corresponding to the control information.

20. (Previously presented): The method of claim 11, wherein the control information includes a program for checking user operation contents, and the third step comprises a fifth step of, when user operation is detected during playback of the multimedia information, executing the program, and playing back multimedia information corresponding to the user operation contents.

21. (Previously presented): A multimedia information playback apparatus, comprising:

a first input unit configured to receive multimedia information during use, wherein the multimedia information comprises video data and audio data distributed from a first distribution source, wherein the first distribution source comprises a storage device for storing the multimedia information, and wherein a user side comprises the first distribution source;

a second input unit configured to receive control information during use, wherein the control information comprises information distributed from a second distribution source, wherein the second distribution source comprises a network server for distributing the control information,

and wherein the control information comprises one or more instructions for reading multimedia information on the storage device; and

a playback unit configured to play back multimedia information received by the first input unit based on at least one of the instructions for reading multimedia of the control information received by the second input unit during use, wherein the multimedia information is distributed from the storage device, and wherein the control information is distributed from the network server, and

wherein the playback means has a first playback mode in which said playback means plays back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by said first input means, on the basis of the control information which is distributed from the storage device and received by said second input means, and wherein the play back of the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by said first input means, on the basis of the control information which is distributed from the network server and received by said second input means by the said playback means is a second playback mode, and the apparatus further comprises switching means for switching a playback mode to either one of the first and second playback modes, and wherein said playback means comprises:

a first navigator unit comprising a first program for reading out the control information in the storage device by said second input means in the first playback mode, analyzing the readout control information, and controlling read of the multimedia information in the storage device in accordance with an analysis result; wherein the first program is stored in the multimedia information playback apparatus; and

a second navigator unit comprising a second program for controlling read of the multimedia information in the storage device on the basis of the control information distributed from the network server in the second playback mode, wherein the second program is obtained from the network server.

22. (Previously presented): A multimedia information playback method, comprising:

receiving multimedia information, wherein the multimedia information comprises video data and audio data distributed from a first distribution source, wherein the first distribution source comprises a storage device for storing the multimedia information, and wherein a user side comprises the first distribution source;

receiving control information, wherein the control information is distributed from a second distribution source, wherein the second distribution source comprises a network server for distributing the control information, and wherein the control information comprises one or more instructions for reading multimedia information on the storage device; and

playing back the received multimedia information based on at least one of the received instructions for reading multimedia information of the control information, wherein the multimedia information is distributed from the storage device, and wherein the control information is distributed from the network server, and wherein the third step comprises:

a fifth step of playing back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by execution of the first step, on the basis of the control information which is distributed from the storage device and received by execution of the second step, wherein the control information is executed by a first control program obtained from an internal storage device; and

a sixth step of playing back the multimedia information which is distributed from the storage device and received by execution of the first step, on the basis of the control information which is distributed from the network server and received by execution of the second step, wherein the control information in the sixth step is executed by a second control program obtained from the network server; and

the method further comprises a seventh step of executing either one of the fifth and sixth steps.

23. (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first distribution source is a DVD-ROM.

24. (Previously presented): The method of claim 11, wherein the first distribution source is a DVD-ROM.

25. (Previously presented): The method of claim 22, wherein the first distribution source is a DVD-ROM.